

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELIZE 00127 130113Z

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 AGR-10 OES-05 L-02 COME-00 AID-05

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FM AMCONSUL BELIZE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE NIACT 3948

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

UNCLAS BELIZE 127

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR BH

SUBJECT: U.S. FOOT AND MOUTH AGREEMENT

GUATEMALA FOR AGATT

PANAMA FOR DR. REA

SAN JOSE FOR DR. MASON

1. I WAS INFORMED TODAY BY DR. BALMORE SILVA, WHO, AS PRINCIPAL VETERINARY OFFICER IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE IS THE SENIOR GOB OFFICIAL CONCERNED WITH MEAT INSPECTION, THAT HE HAD SEQUESTERED AND INVENTORIED ALL THE MEAT PRODUCTS IMPORTED INTO BELIZE IN VIOLATION OF THE OIRSA AGREEMENT.

2. SINCE BELIZE HAS NO BONDED WAREHOUSE SUITABLE FOR THIS PURPOSE, DR. SILVA HAS TAKEN POSSESSION OF A COLD STORAGE ROOM AT BRODIES WHERE THE MEAT IS BEING HELD PENDING DISPOSITION. DECISION TO DESTROY PART OF THE PRODUCTS IN QUESTION HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE. EFFORTS TO RETURN BACON TO BRITISH SOURCE STILL UNDERWAY.

3. COLD STORAGE ROOM WHICH DR. SILVA HAS TAKEN OVER HAS BEEN SECURED WITH TWO PADLOCKS AND A TAMPER-PROOF NUMBERED LEAD SEAL SUCH AS THAT USED ON ELECTRIC POWER METERS. CUSTODY OF PADLOCK
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KEYS AND SURVEILLANCE OF STORAGE FACILITY ASSIGNED TO A SUBOR-

DINATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL, BUT RESPONSIBILITY RETAINED BY DR. SILVA WHO HAS ASSURED ME THAT MEAT CANNOT BE REMOVED FROM STORAGE WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE. I INSPECTED THE ARRANGEMENT THIS AFTERNOON AND AM UNABLE TO SEE HOW IT COULD BE COMPROMISED.

4. MEANWHILE WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY A SENIOR OFFICIAL IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE THAT, UPON ORDERS OF PREMIER PRICE, A NEW PROCEDURE FOR CLEARING MEAT IMPORTS WILL BE PLACED IN EFFECT WHICH WILL REQUIRE THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE TO GIVE ITS APPROVAL TO ALL INCOMING SHIPMENTS OF MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS.

5. PREMIER PRICE HAS PERSONALLY INFORMED ME OF HIS CONCERN OVER THIS MATTER AND HAS EXPRESSED HIS DETERMINATION TO INSURE THAT THERE BE NO RECURRENCE.

6. INCIDENT HAS HAD THE EFFECT OF PUBLICIZING THE PROVISIONS OF THE OIRSA AGREEMENTS ABOUT WHICH MOST LOCAL MERCHANTS WERE PROBABLY IGNORANT.

7. ALSO, MAGNITUDE OF LOSS INVOLVED, NOW THAT THE STORY HAS BEEN CIRCULATED AROUND TOWN, SHOULD BE A PERSUASIVE DETERRENT AGAINST FUTURE VIOLATIONS FOR A LONG TIME TO COME.

8. EVEN SO, I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT DR. MASON CONTINUE UNABATED HIS SURVEILLANCE AND INDOCTRINATION ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE GOB IN REGARD TO THE IMPORTATION OF MEAT INTO BELIZE. GAWF

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